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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3339th meeting of the Security Council, held on 25 February 1994, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item "The situation in Liberia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Liberia (S/1994/168 and Add.1).

"The Council welcomes the agreement reached at Monrovia contained in the communiqué of 15 February 1994 (S/1994/187, annex), in which the parties once again reaffirmed their commitment to the Cotonou Agreement as the basis for a lasting political settlement to the Liberian conflict. The Council calls upon the parties to uphold strictly the timetable outlined in that communiqué: the commencement of disarmament and the installation of a transitional government on 7 March 1994, and the holding of free and fair general elections on 7 September 1994. The Council urges the parties to resolve quickly their differences on the disposition of the four remaining Cabinet posts.

"The Council, however, wishes to express its concern about the recent upsurge in violence in Liberia and the related disruption of humanitarian relief shipments, to which the rise of new military groups and problems of military indiscipline among the existing factions have contributed. It deplores the consequent loss of life, destruction of property and the increased number of people that have since been displaced. The Council calls on all Liberian parties to adhere strictly to the cease-fire agreement and to cooperate fully with the international relief efforts in order to put an end to the obstacles periodically impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid.

"The Council is gravely concerned at the delays in implementing the commitments entered into by the parties under the Cotonou Agreement, in particular the commencement of disarmament and the installation of the Liberian National Transitional Government.

"The Council reminds the parties that they themselves bear ultimate responsibility for the successful implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. The Liberian parties should bear in mind that the support of the international community and of the Security Council will not continue in the absence of tangible progress towards full and prompt implementation of the Agreement, in particular, the revised timetable. These delays jeopardize both the viability of the Cotonou Agreement itself and the ability of UNOMIL to fulfil its mandate.

"The Council looks forward to the proposed meeting of ECOWAS Foreign Ministers in March and to continued progress on the ground. The Council underlines the importance of adhering to the timetable and will review the situation again in March 1994 to evaluate what progress has been made.

"The Council underlines the importance of disarmament to the successful implementation of the Cotonou Agreement and in this context, notes the central role in the disarmament process given to ECOMOG under the Agreement.

"The Council, therefore, takes note of the Secretary-General's observation that the ECOMOG forces face considerable financial and logistical difficulties and strongly supports his call on Member States to assist the peace process by providing the necessary financial and logistical resources to ECOMOG to enable it to meet its obligations under the Cotonou Agreement. The Council supports the Secretary-General's appeal to all Member States which have not already done so to contribute generously to the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia. The Council concurs with the Secretary-General that UNOMIL's ability to carry out its mandate depends on the capacity of ECOMOG to discharge its responsibilities.

"The Council commends ECOWAS and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for their continued efforts to restore peace, security and stability in Liberia. The Council notes with appreciation that the ECOMOG force has now been expanded pursuant to resolution 866 (1993) and commends all countries which have contributed troops and resources to ECOMOG since its inception in 1990.

"The Council commends also the efforts of Member States and humanitarian organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Liberian civil war. The anticipated reunification of the country by 7 March 1994 and the ensuring repatriation of Liberian refugees will accelerate the demand for additional humanitarian relief, and in this regard the Council urgently appeals to Member States and humanitarian organizations to increase their assistance to Liberia.

"The Council reaffirms its appreciation for the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative towards the establishment of a lasting peace in Liberia."